



## **Neighborhood Networks Week 2005**

### ***Invite the Neighborhood. Widen the Network.***



### **How Has My Neighborhood Networks Center Helped Enrich My Life?**

By Tricia Melton

Hi, that's me, Tricia Melton, in the picture above. I am a resident of Green Hills Apartments, located in Knoxville, Tennessee, and an ongoing student at the Green Hills Learning Center, Inc. When I read about your contest, I had to respond. Please understand that whether I win the contest or not, I am grateful for the opportunity to tell you what I think of our Neighborhood Networks center.

The Green Hills Learning Center, Inc. has helped me to mature as a person. It has given me a means to break the cycle of living on government welfare programs by allowing me to get to know my abilities, while challenging myself to make something of my life. Through the center, I have learned so much.

When I signed up for my first computer class at the center, I thought it wasn't for me, and that I wouldn't learn anything. I went initially because the Tennessee Department of Human Services, Families First program required me to attend school, or face having my benefits taken away. I can't begin to tell you how wrong I was on my original assessment. I have learned that computers aren't just for playing games, and I've learned so many skills needed in today's job market. I am still learning that you have to have the motivation and determination to achieve the goals you want in life and that you have to go out and make a name for yourself. I've learned success won't just fall in my lap and that it requires a lot of hard work. I've learned I owe it to myself and my kids to persevere to succeed.

From the knowledge already gleaned as a result of the Neighborhood Networks Green Hills Learning Center, Inc., I can only tell you that I thirst for more. Until attending the center, I had never been made to feel that I was worth anything. I had never been taught that I am somebody. I had never been encouraged to use my mind. Even though I attended many other programs through various agencies, they seemed a waste of time. I left those programs with my self-esteem unchanged; I was just glad when I didn't have to go anymore.

Were it not for the center at Green Hills, I might never have thought seriously about past choices I made, or future plans in my life. I might have been content to live the remainder of my life on welfare, and watching my children and grandchildren do the same. Now, though I'm not ashamed of my home, I want to move up and move out.

With the concerns and care that Neighborhood Networks has vested in centers everywhere, and with the guidance of Mrs. Diana, my teacher at our center, I know that one day you may very well purchase one of my greeting cards. My goal is to have my own greeting card business, specializing in unique and custom designed cards. I truly appreciate Neighborhood Networks for following through with their dream to assist people like me in changing their lives in a positive manner.

Unfortunately, there will probably always be people that don't get it. These people are the whiners and complainers of the world, always blaming others for their failures. Sadly, there are people living at Green Hills that don't take advantage of the opportunity right here in their face. They haven't come to



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realize that hand-outs can run-out. There may come a time when our government can no longer feed, clothe and shelter those of us who haven't the means to do so on our own. Then, where will we be? I cannot speak for others, but I intend to be self supporting long before this happens. Again, thanks to the center at Green Hills, I'm on my way.

I have grown to love my teacher, Mrs. Diana. Mrs. Diana came here to do what she loves, and take the time to teach everyone, old and young. Over the years that I have known her, we have formed a close bond. I give her the credit for recognizing my potential and encouraging me to use it. When I think back on the people who have used the center, and Mrs. Diana's guidance, I am reminded of the single mother who now has a Habitat house. I am reminded of a neighbor that used to live across the hall from me. She was a single parent with four children. After finishing classes at the center she enrolled in an electrician's program and went through their apprenticeship program. She now lives in a large home in a nice subdivision, and has a good paying job as an electrician. I am reminded my friend Belenda who started a food pantry for the residents of Green Hills after graduating from class. There have been many people through the years that have benefited from the center. I thank God for giving us the talent and abilities. I thank Neighborhood Networks for providing the center for our use, and thank Mrs. Diana for motivating us and teaching us skills that will help us throughout our life's journey.

Our center has hosted many Christmas, Easter, Valentine's, Halloween, Back-to-School, and other parties. Mrs. Diana encourages us to volunteer our time and energies for these events. She raises the funding, and we help with the cooking, setting up and anything else needed to be done in order to make these parties happen. We all know that it's not a one person show, but rather a joint partnership between those that care and want to make a difference, and those that don't.

I hope you now understand how our Neighborhood Networks center has enriched my life. Thank you for having one in my apartment complex.

### **Neighborhood Networks Week 2005**

#### **Essay Contest Winner**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Place, 18-64 Age Group**

Name: Tricia Melton  
Center Name: Green Hills Learning Center, Inc.  
Location: Knoxville, TN  
Age Category: 18-64